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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship education is a growing field in university business schools, community colleges, and public schools. According to the literature, business education focuses on running a business whereas entrepreneurship education focuses on the skills needed to conceive of and start up a brand new business venture. The necessary components of entrepreneurship education may be categorized as follows: opportunity recognition; the marshaling and commitment of resources; and the creation of an operating business organization. The following topics have been suggested for inclusion in the entrepreneurship education curriculum: defining entrepreneurship; completing a self-assessment; creating an idea; developing a business plan; running a business; and environmental, political, and international issues. Recommended curricular goals of entrepreneurship education are as follows: (1) learn to develop ideas (learning to research opportunities, researching customer insights, understanding market needs, conducting a self-assessment of personal creativity, conducting a feasibility study, and identifying various business entry strategies); (2) prepare to start a business (by assessing personal resources and finances, researching and evaluating the risks necessary to get started, writing a working business plan, and approaching others for money and resources); and (3) build a viable business (by learning to allocate resources, using various marketing strategies, and managing money and personnel). (MN)

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Entrepreneurial Education Teaching Guide

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Entrepreneurial Education Teaching Guide

By Carolyn Brown

Entrepreneurship education is a growing field of interest in university business schools, community colleges, and public schools. Curriculum for entrepreneurship education is being developed, refined and debated at numerous institutions across the country. Several key curricular questions are apparent: How is entrepreneurship education defined? How does it differ from business education or business management training? What are the critical components of entrepreneurial training?

Definition of Entrepreneurial Education

To begin a discussion on entrepreneurial education, it is useful to look at definitions and distinctions between entrepreneurial education and business education. While "a concise universally accepted definition of entrepreneur or entrepreneurship does not exist… there is agreement that entrepreneurs have common personality traits" (Noll, 1993, p.3). Noll goes on to say that entrepreneurship needs to be defined more broadly than business management in that it includes creativity, risk taking, and innovation, traits not normally nurtured in a standard business environment (Noll, 1993).

Kourilsky defines entrepreneurship education as "opportunity recognition, marshalling of resources in the presence of risk, and building a business venture" (Kourilsky 1995, p.12). Bechard and Toulouse define entrepreneurial education as "a collection of formalized teachings that informs, trains, and educates anyone interested in participating in socioeconomic development through a project to promote entrepreneurship awareness, business creation, or

small business development (1998, p. 320). They point out that entrepreneurial education focuses on combining and carrying out a new combination of business elements while education for small business ownership focuses on the skills needed to reproduce or acquire an existing business. Gottleib and Ross (1997) define entrepreneurship education in terms of creativity and innovation applied to social, governmental, and business arenas.

Entrepreneurship education, then, should be viewed broadly in terms of the skills that can be taught and characteristics that can be engendered in students that can help them develop new and innovative plans. It focuses on the features that are needed to conceive of and start up a brand new business venture. The skills taught in business education classes are needed by entrepreneurs as well, but the curriculum generally addresses important functions of running a business rather than aspects of starting a business. Under the current period of economic growth, many are advocating entrepreneurial education to develop new ideas and start new business.

Components of an Effective Curriculum

Kourilsky (1995) places necessary curricular components into three groups:

- opportunity recognition
- the marshaling and commitment of resources
- the creation of an operating business organization.

Opportunity recognition involves the identification of unfulfilled desires of the marketplace and creation of ideas for services or products that meet needs at acceptable prices. Opportunity recognition requires observation of the market, insight into customer needs and desires, and invention and adaptation. Marshalling the investment of resources involves a willingness to take risks and invest resources, as well as skills for securing outside investment.

The creation of an operating business organization to deliver the product or services involves development, financing, marketing, and management skills.

Amar Bhide and Myra Maloney Hart at the Harvard Business School focus on three main concepts in their entrepreneurial courses:

- evaluating opportunities;
- securing resources;
- growing and sustaining the enterprise (Gottleib & Ross, 1997).

Noll's (1993) recommendations for entrepreneurial education are designed to serve as a curricular guideline for all age and education levels. Suggested topics include:

- defining entrepreneurship;
- completing a self-assessment;
- creating an idea;
- developing the business plan (including marketing, financial projection and organizational plan;
- running the business;
- environmental, political and international issues.

Kimberly Roach lists the following objectives for her entrepreneurial course at North Georgia Technical Institute (North Georgia Technical Institute, 1999):

- knowledge of the characteristics of an entrepreneur;
- ability to recognize business opportunities;
- basic skills and knowledge to create an effective feasibility plan for a business venture;
- ability to identify the various business entry strategies available to entrepreneurs;

- understanding of the skills needed and means available to collect the market information needed to evaluate the feasibility of a new business concept.

Curricular Recommendations for Entrepreneurial Courses

The three general categories provided by Kourilsky and Bhide and Maloney are similar in their intent to look at entrepreneurial education as teaching the skills to develop a small business enterprise. The recommendations by Noll and Roach focus more on the characteristics needed to be a successful entrepreneur -- the skills that can be applied to entrepreneurial enterprises whether in business, government or the social arena. Variations of these objectives are taught in high schools as part of the business education programs, in community colleges (in both matriculated program and extension courses), in four-year universities and in graduate schools of business in the United States and abroad.

Both Noll (1993) and Roach (North Georgia Technical Institute, 1999) suggest defining an entrepreneur and entrepreneurship as a starting place when teaching entrepreneurship. Depending on the audience, this may or may not be necessary. Recommended curricular goals are as follows:

Learn to develop ideas by:

- learning to recognize business opportunities;
- researching customer insights;
- understanding the needs of the market in terms of services, products, and price;
- conducting a self-assessment of personal creativity;
- conducting a feasibility study;
- identifying various business entry strategies.

Prepare to start a business by:

- assessing personal resources and financial status;
- researching and evaluating the risks necessary to get started;
- writing a working business plan;
- approaching others for money and other resources.

Build a viable business by:

- learning to allocate resources;
- using various marketing strategies;
- managing money and personnel.

These essential curricular components could be applied in any setting where entrepreneurship education is needed---schools, community groups, or private instruction. A growing number of teachers and academics are developing and publishing textbooks and curricula for entrepreneurial education. Many of these are referenced in the on-line database for the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Clearinghouse on Entrepreneurship Education at *http://www.celcee.edu*.

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